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Letter dated 10 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit the address by the President of the Republic of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, given on 8 February 2017, on the occasion of the traditional ceremony to exchange New Year's wishes with the members of the diplomatic and consular corps and the representatives of international organizations accredited to Burundi (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Albert **Shingiro**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 10 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Speech of the President of the Republic of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, given on 8 February 2017, on the occasion of the traditional ceremony to exchange New Year's wishes with the members of the diplomatic and consular corps and the representatives of international organizations accredited to Burundi

1. At this solemn moment, when we come together for the traditional ceremony to exchange New Year's wishes, let us first give thanks to God Almighty for his clemency and blessings in the year 2016. We shall also implore Him to remain with us throughout this year.

2. I extend to you a cordial welcome to this beautiful city of Ngozi and I thank you for attending, in great number, this traditional function that allows us to mutually exchange wishes. May the year that began a month and a week ago be, for all of us, a time of peace, good health, prosperity and joy.

3. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, Your Excellencies, members of the diplomatic and consular corps and representatives of international organizations accredited to Burundi, for the best wishes you have extended to the people of Burundi, to me and to my family, through the touching words of His Excellency, Oupa Monareng, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa and Vice-Dean of the diplomatic and consular corps accredited to Burundi.

4. On behalf of the people and the Government of Burundi, in my name and in the name of my family, I would like to reciprocate the wishes you have extended to us.

5. May 2017 be a good and happy year for the countries and organizations you represent, for yourselves, for your families and for all those who are dear to you; a year of peace, security, national concord and resolution of all the conflicting situations that the contemporary world is experiencing today.

6. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the year 2016 was characterized by many security and humanitarian crises around the world, and Burundi was not spared. Indeed, there were political crises in Africa, the intensification of wars in the Near and Middle East, famines and floods, droughts and bushfires, earthquakes and the flow of migrants towards the West at an exponential pace, to name but a few.

7. Beyond statements of good intentions and the contents of international conventions on climate change, we believe that further efforts should be made in favour of the peoples of the less industrialized countries, who are the constant victims of the climate change and global warming that continue to destroy the ecosystem and biodiversity, causing material and human damage, often to the detriment of innocent populations.

8. In spite of the shock waves felt here and there, the different peoples of the world in general, and the people of Burundi in particular, have not sunk into despair or discouragement, confirming once again the innate capacities of man for endurance and in his search for survival.

9. As far as Burundi is concerned, you have had time to closely follow developments in our country. You may have noticed that the beginning and the end of 2016 were quite different in terms of security. As peace and security are a constant concern, here as elsewhere, we will spare no effort to do better than we did in 2016.

10. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I wish the year 2017 to be a year of return to the homeland for our compatriots who have fled Burundi. In actual fact, peace and security are a reality in Burundi, and the Government and people of Burundi are ready to welcome them and to move along with them in preparation for the 2020 elections, because this is the right time.

11. I thank Burundians who plucked up their courage to return home despite the persistent, overwhelming and discouraging rumours.

12. In order to make the people more participatory in matters pertaining to the life of the nation, the Government has established a National Commission for Inter-Burundian Dialogue. This Commission is an open platform for all Burundians to make their views known over a series of questions concerning the life of the country.

13. Based on views expressed by the population of different social strata, a commission tasked with studying and suggesting amendments to some articles of the Constitution will soon be established, in order to update them and harmonize them with the laws and conventions ratified by Burundi, especially those governing regional integration within the East African Community.

14. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to briefly clarify the major features of my New Year's address to the nation. In the area of cooperation between Burundi and the international community, I reaffirm that Burundi has continued its search to expand the circle of friends, according to present-day and future interests of the country and its citizens.

15. Our diplomatic relations continue normally. Despite some sporadic incidents, there are no clouds in the relations of friendship and cooperation between Burundi and its traditional partners, to which new ones have been added with whom we share the same principle of mutual respect.

16. However, we cannot but acknowledge that misunderstandings and apprehensions with and from a few partners have arisen in the wake of the 2015 general elections, with repercussions that unfortunately continue at the present time, culminating in a deterioration of our bilateral relations with some countries and organizations.

17. There are also organizations, the media and so-called experts that have spared no effort to tarnish the image of Burundi through defamatory and slanderous reports and grotesque arrangements that are all converging towards a manoeuvre of changing the regime by undemocratic methods.

18. I call upon these countries, organizations and the media to regain their consciousness and to respect the international provisions on international relations and the sovereignty of States.

19. In the year 2017, my ultimate wish is that the classic approach of dialogue and consultation with Burundi's partners bear a special stamp, which is to permanently remove these misunderstandings and apprehensions and return to the principles of understanding and mutual respect.

20. Burundi will always remain attentive and constantly available to the international community, of which it is a full member. It is with this in mind that our troops on peacekeeping missions will continue their efforts alongside other countries, in spite of some form of ingratitude shown by some partners. Since the terrorist threat is global, we believe that the effective response should therefore be global, too, and that each of our countries has a role to play.

21. Several tragedies around the world have reminded us that terrorism is now multifaceted and has no borders. We must dare to say it, to name the evils, without exaggeration or omissions. Terrorism has killed peaceful citizens; lives have been swept away in Burundi, in the name of pseudopolitical demands.

22. In 2016, innocent families became bereaved by people who made terrorism their strategy, people who decided that some Burundians should perish in order to put pressure on the Government of Burundi and thus complete the failed 2015 coup. Today, the sponsors of these terrorist acts, reinforced by the kindness, if not the complicity, of some countries, are taunting the judicial institutions of the country, which are prevented from doing their jobs properly in the name of protecting human rights.

23. Let this year become a new beginning in the fight against terrorism, a fresh start in our choices, which must be more responsible. We find the declamation of anti-terrorist and pro-democratic literature to be absurd, hypocritical, paradoxical and utopian at a time when, behind the scenes, multiform supports are constantly granted to the troublemakers who stir things up and sow discord in the world to the detriment of responsible governments that are fighting tooth and nail against terrorism and to assert the rule of law. Promoting impunity will never erode terrorism.

24. The ethics of reciprocity, or the golden rule, refers to a moral rule whose fundamental principle is stated in virtually all the major religions and cultures of the world as follows: "Treat others as you would like them to treat you" or "Do not do to others what you would not want to be done to you".

25. Always bear in mind that God is fair at all times and in all places. The scriptures are clear indeed upon this matter: "For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again".

26. I encourage the members of the diplomatic missions to Burundi and the representatives of international organizations working in our country to continue to comply with the international instruments governing international relations.

27. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my belief is that each political authority should not be limited to guaranteeing the safety of its citizens. We should become true promoters and peacemakers in thoughts, words and actions. Peace should never

be taken for granted; it always has to be built. It must be a constant concern and must assume an inclusive character.

28. This is therefore my wish for the year, which is already in its sixth week. Let there be many new opportunities to work together and to build genuine peace between our countries and their peoples. For its part, the Republic of Burundi, through the Ministry of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation, will always be available to collaborate with all those who commit themselves to ending the ongoing conflicts and to bringing support and hope to the suffering populations.

29. Before concluding my remarks, on behalf of the Government and the people of Burundi, I would like to reiterate my thanks to all of you gathered here today, to your countries and organizations, for the way in which you regularly contribute to supporting the independence and sovereignty of our country on the one hand and the development of our dear country on the other. I urge you to continue this praiseworthy action.

30. "Peace be with you!" This is how the Burundians begin and end their speeches. With this expression, a pledge of abundant blessings of every kind, I renew to each of you, distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, to your families and to the countries and organizations that you have the honour and the privilege of representing here in Burundi, my greetings and my most sincere wishes for the year 2017.

31. Long live the cooperation between the peoples of the world! Thank you for your kind attention.